

# America's Declarations, Purposes and Actions in War What Walt Whitman Predicted in Writings of Sixty Years Ago They Would Be When Test Came

His Works Read in View of Great Conflict, American Carpenter, Clerk and Printer Outstrips Homer, Outings Virgil and Dante, O'erleaps Shakespeare, Distances Goethe and Schiller.

THE great war has made an American, Walt Whitman, one of the greatest of world poets. Whitman wrote his poetry, prophecies and songs about the period of the civil war. He was recognized as a distinct American poet by Europeans in the 60s and 70s, but has had slight recognition in his native land.

The events of the great war, America's entry therein, the declarations and purposes, the actions of the United States have been just what Whitman said they would be, wished they would be, hoped they would be sixty years before. Whitman was an enthusiastic American. He believed in the United States and the high purposes and duties of the republic in the scheme of civilization.

He had a set purpose to lay down a world policy for his country. The country is now carrying out the world policy that Walt Whitman, great American, the first poet of democracy and the first democrat of poets, wrote for it sixty years ago.

Whitman was born at West End, L. I., in 1819, and died at Camden, N. J., in 1892. For fifty years his poetry has been the pleasure and despair of critics. British critics have long acclaimed him the only really distinctive American poet and welcomed him warmly. American critics have been wont to deny him merit.

## Whitman Foresaw War Sixty Years.

READ today, Whitman is the greatest of poets and truest of prophets. He foresaw, predicted and "placed" the great war sixty years before it was fought. He forecast America's part in the world drama of today. He even named the time America would take part in the war.

There is little use writing about Whitman. Let us assert that he was the great seer and prophet of "these States," as he loved to call them, and then read this prophecy written in 1836, fifty-eight years before the great war began:

I see not America only—I see not only Liberty's nation, but other nations preparing.

I see tremendous entrances and exits—I see new combinations—I see the solidarity of men.

I see that force advancing, with irresistible power, upon the world stage;

I see Freedom completely arm'd and victorious and with law on her side, both issuing forth against the idea of caste;

What historic denouements are these we so rapidly approach?

I see men marching and counter-marching, by swift millions.

I see the frontiers and boundaries of old aristocracies broken.

I see the landmarks of European kings removed.

I see this day the people beginning their landmarks (all other ways),

Never were such sharp questions asked as in this day.

Never was the average man, his soul, more energetic, more like a God.

Lo, he urges and urges, leaving the masses no rest;

His daring foot is on land and sea, everywhere.

Are all the nations communing? Is there going to be but one heart to the globe?

Is humanity forming en masse—for, lo, tyrants tremble, crowns grow dim.

The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general, divine war;

No one knows what will happen next—such portents fill the days and nights.

Unborn deeds, things soon to be, project their shapes around me.

The performed America and Europe grown dim, retreating in the shadow behind me.

The unperformed, more significant than ever, advance, advance upon me.

Whitman set the great days of the United States for the time when the nation had 100,000,000 inhabitants. America had almost exactly that number of inhabitants when the great war began. When the country had 100,000,000 inhabitants it was to play its great part in the world.

It is almost impossible to write about Whitman. He is too big, too great, too all-embracing to describe. John Addington Symonds, the great British critic and bookman, said that Whitman was like the universe, the earth, sky, stars, firmament, all of the world. There is a literature about Whitman as long as a road ditch. Writers all complain that they cannot describe or explain him. He himself especially warns his readers to beware of those who would expound him. "I cannot expound myself," he says.

Whitman Made the American Ideal.

WHITMAN wrote his poetry for democracy. His hero is the average man, the mechanic, farmer, plowman, street cleaner, planter, sailor, river man, pilot, car driver. Democracy is the very breath of his nostrils. He writes of democracy for democracy.

Yet of all men the average man, whom he sings and adores, is least likely to understand him.

Whitmanites, followers of the poet, say that he made the American ideal. I rather think that he caught the American ideal. He has not established it. The average man knows nothing about Whitman. Longfellow, James Whitcomb Riley, Eugene Field and Walt Mason are poets as the average American understands poetry.

As poets these sweet singers compare with Whitman as a fly compares with a lion.

Whitman is the poet of democracy, of the average man. Yet only a trained reader who has a fund of fresh, simple, wholesome natural feeling and love of real things at his disposal can really understand Whitman.

Whitman glorifies the average man, yet the average man will deny him.

Now that his prophecy has been fulfilled, the description rings as true as if the same great master hand had written it today. Mark the line:

The earth, restive, confronts a new era, perhaps a general, divine war.

That's what it is, a "divine war," a war for liberty of all the world.

America can draw great comfort from this prophecy and that one line.

Prophecy in 1836 Accomplished in 1914.

PEOPLE call it a terrible war. Whitman calls it a "divine war." That is what it is. Therefore let us take cheer from our American seer, poet and prophet and divinely fight out and divinely finish this "divine war" for world liberty.

This was Whitman's prophecy of what was to happen in Europe, written in 1836 and accomplished in 1914:

Suddenly, out of its drowsy lair, the lair of slaves,

Like lightning it (democracy) leaps forth, half startled at itself.

Its feet upon the ashes and the rags—its hands upon the throats of kings.

O, hope and faith,

O, aching close of exiled patriots' lives,

O, many a sickened heart,

Turn back unto this day and make yourself afresh.

This is for the German military caste: And you, said to defy the people, you liars,

Not for the numberless agonies, murders, tortures

For court thieving in its manifold mean forms, worming from his simplicity

For many a promise sworn by royal lips and broken, and laughed at in the breaking.

Then in their power, not for all these did the blood strike revenge or the heads of nobles fall.

The people scorned the ferocity of kings.

The last line is submitted to the Kaiser for his cognition.

Each comes in state with his train, hangman, clergyman, tax-gatherer, soldier, lawyer, lord, jailer and sycophants.

Yet behind all, hovering, stealing—lo a Shape

Vague as the night, draped infernally, head, front and form in scarlet folds,

Whose face and eyes none may see.

Out of its robes—the red robes lifted by the arm,

One finger crooked pointed high over the top, like the head of a snake appears.

Meanwhile the corpses lie in the new-made graves—bloody corpses of young men,

The rope of the gibbet hangs heavily, the bullets of the princes are flying, the creatures of power laugh aloud.

All these things bear fruit—and they are good.

These corpses of young men,

These martyrs that hand from the gibbets—these hearts plucked by the gray lead,

Cold and motionless they are alive, elsewhere with unslaughtered vitality.

They live in other men, oh, kings,

They live in brothers ready again to defy you.

They were purified by death—they were taught and exalted.

Not a grave of the murdered for freedom

but grows seed for freedom, in its turn to bear seed.

Which the winds carry afar and sow and the rains and the snow nourish.

Not a disembodied spirit can the weapons of tyrants be loose.

But it stalks invisibly over the earth, whispering, counseling, cautioning.

Liberty, to others despair of you. I never despair of you.

As a vision of what Europe was, is and will be, as a sheer intimate description of the Kaiser's passage through Belgium, can the above, written fifty years ago by a man who never was off the North American Continent, be equalled?

America's Message to Oppressed Peoples.

WE are talking every day of "making the world safe for democracy" for peoples and of the unselfish brotherhood and sisterhood of Americans for all peoples.

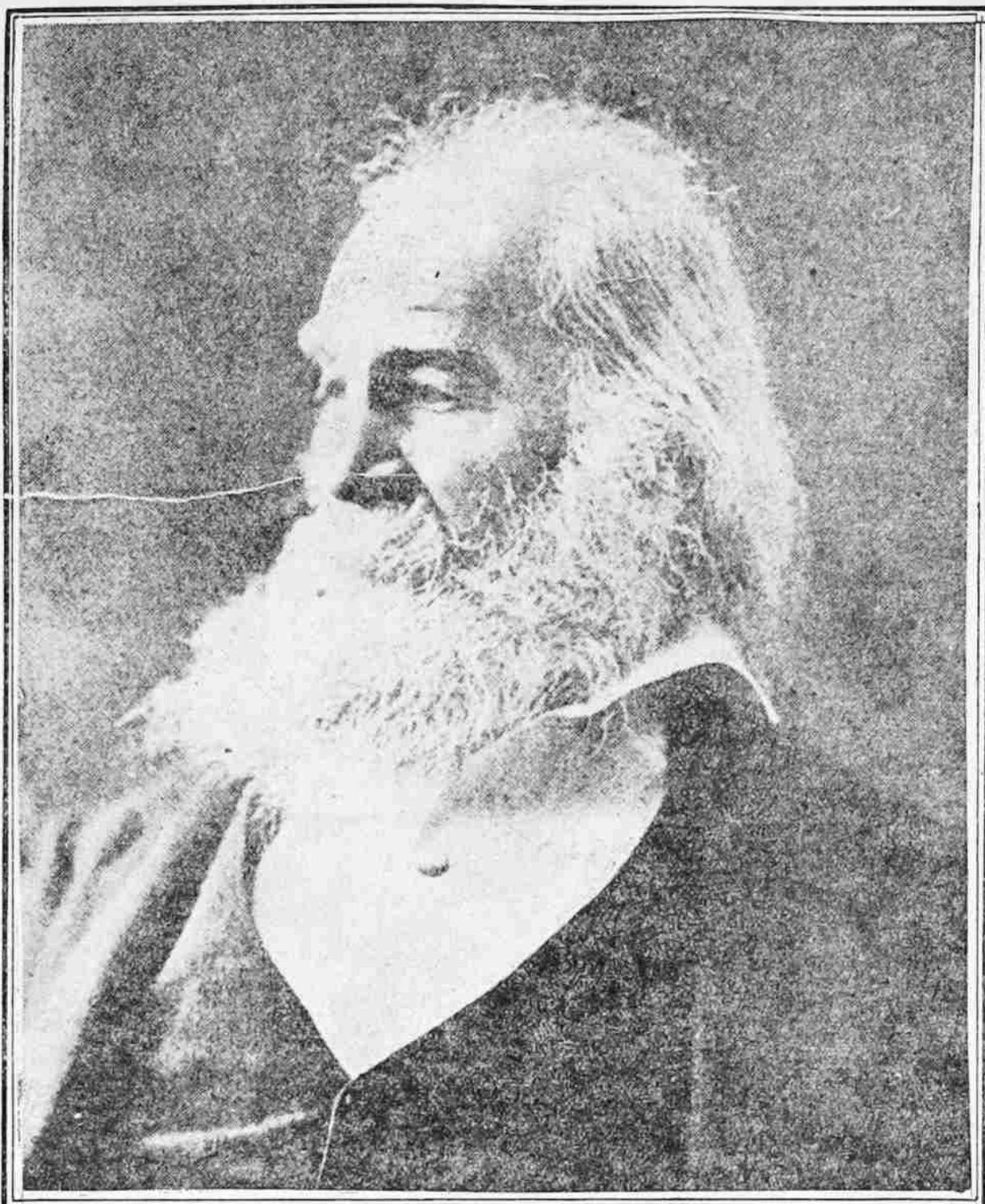
Read this vision of what American claims to be today written by Whitman sixty years ago in his "Salute to the World":

You, where are you?

You son or daughter of England,

You of the mighty Slavic tribes and empires, you Russ in Russia,

You dim-descended, black-faced, divinesouled African, large, fine-headed,



WALT WHITMAN, GREAT AMERICAN POET AND PEER

nobly formed, superbly destined, on even terms with me,

You Norwegian, Swede, Dane, Teutlander, Prussian,

You Spaniard of Spain, you Portuguese,

You Frenchwoman and Frenchman of France,

You Helic, you liberty lover of the Netherlands,

You sturdy Austrian, Lombard, Hun, Bohemian, farmer of Styria,

You neighbor of the Danube,

You workman of the Rhine, the Elbe, the Weser; you working woman, too,

You Sardinian, you Bavarian, you Swabian, Saxon, Wallachian, Bulgarian,

You citizen of Prague, you Roman, Neapolitan, Greek,

You libe mislader of the arena at Seville,

You mountaineer living lawlessly on the Taurus or the Caucasus,

You Bohk horseherd watching your mares and stallions feeding,

You beautiful-bodied Persian, at full speed the blood strike revenge or the heads of nobles fall,

You Chinaman and Chinawoman of China, you Tartar of Tartary,

You women of the earth subordinated in your tasks,

You Jew journeying in your old age, through every risk, to stand once more on Syrian ground,

You other Jew waiting in all lands for your Messiah!

You thoughtful Armenian, pondering by sands of the Euphrates, you peering amid the ruins of Nineveh, you ascending Mount Ararat;

You footworn pilgrims welcoming the far-away sparrow of the minarets of Mecca;

You Sholke along the stretch, from Suez to Babylonia, ruling your families and tribes,

You olive grower tending your fruit on the vale of Nazareth Damascus or Lake Tiberias,

You Thibet trader on the wide inland, or bargaining in the shops of Lhasa,

You Japanese man or woman, you liver in Madagascar, Ceylon or Borneo,

All you continentals of Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, indifferent of place,

All you numberless inhabitants of the archipelagoes of the sea,

And you of centuries of hence, when you listen to me;

And you each and everywhere whom I specify not, but include just the same,

Health to you all, good will to you all—from me and from America; sent; for we acknowledge you all and each.

That as Whitman's and America's message of greeting, good will and assurance of help and succor to the oppressed peoples of the world, written more than sixty years ago.

This is Whitman's idea of an American man.

A man is a summons and a challenge, whichever the sex, whatever the reason or place, he may go safely and loftily and freely by day and by night.

He has the pass-key to hearts—to him the response of the prying hands on the knobs.

His welcome is universal—the flow of beauty is not more fresh or universal than he is.

The person he favors by day or sleeps with at night is blessed.

He says indifferently and alike, How are you, friends? to the president at his levee.

And he says, good-by, my brother, to Cudge that looms in the sugar field.

And both understand him and both know that his speech is right.

He walks with perfect ease in the Capitol, the streets among the Congress and one representative voice to another. Here is our equal, appearing and new.

Then the mechanics take him for a mechanic, and the soldiers suppose him to be a captain and the sailors that he has followed the sea;

And the authors take him for an author and the artists for an artist,

And the laborers perceive that he could labor with them and love them.

No matter what the work is, he is the one to follow it or has followed it.

No matter what the nation, that he might find his brothers and sisters there.

This is the way Whitman speaks to all men who are or who wish to be Americans.

My Comrade,

For you to share with me two greatnesses—

and a third one, rising, and more inclusive among the Congress and one representative voice to another.

The greatness of Love and of Democracy—and the third greatness of religion.

"Who Are You When in America?"

At this time, when Americans demand the uttermost faith and loyalty from all who dwell in the United States, the following will be enlightening:

WHITMAN did not wait until the United States was at war with Germany. He wrote sixty years ago these words, admirably applicable at this moment:

"Who are you, indeed, who would talk or sing in America?"

"Have you studied out MY LAND, its idioms and its men?"

"Have you learned the physiology, phrenology, politics, geography, pride, freedom, friendship of my land, its substrata and objects?"

"Have you considered the organic compound of the first day of the first year of the independence of the states, signed by the commissioners, ratified by the states and read by Washington at the head of the army?"

"Have you possessed yourself of the federal constitution?"

"Do you acknowledge liberty, with audible and absolute acknowledgment, and set slavery at naught for life and death?"

"Are you faithful to these things?"

"Can you hold your hand against all seductions, follies, whirrs, fierce contentions? Are you very strong? Are you for the whole people?"

"Are you not for some coterie, school or religion?"

"Have you vivified yourself from the maternity of these states?"

"Have you sucked the nipples of the breasts of the mother of many children?"

"What is this you bring my America?"

"Is it uniform with my country?"

"Does it answer universal needs?"

"Will it improve manners?"

"Does it meet modern discoveries, facts, calibers, facts, face to face?"

"Will it absorb into me as I absorb food and air, nobility, meanness—to appear again in my strength, gait, face?"

"Does it respect me? Democracy, the soul today?"

"What does it mean to me, to American persons, progressers, cities, Chicago, Arkansas, the planter, Tankee, Georgian, native immigrant, sailors, squatters, old states, new states?"

"Does it encompass all the states and unexceptional rights of all the men and women of the earth, the gentile impulse of these states?"

Whitman demands that men who live in America shall not only understand that America is a nation, but shall

DOG INVESTIGATES ENTOMOLOGY

IN PRODUCING photoplays four hours are devoted to arranging the scene and rehearsing the action and four seconds to photographing the result. No wonder, then, that Luke, a canine comedian, should feel bored to extinction after waiting almost an entire afternoon while "Fatty" Arbuckle fussed over preparations for filming a fragment of fun.

Luke slept as long as he could, got up, stretched, yawned, pawed at the hard board floor to make a soft spot to lie on, turned around, three times and curled up. But it was no go. He could not even shut his eyes. Just as he was about to expire of ennui a bumblebee flew in through the open studio window and pounced upon a bonbon an extra girl had dropped on the floor within a foot of Luke's nose.

HERE was something of interest at last, Luke gazed intently at the bumblebee, then got up an amazed harder. Then he hit the bumblebee a playful tap with a forepaw. At last

his nose between them to await the bumblebee's approach.

WHEN the bumblebee was within 2 inches Luke gave it another shove as an invitation to tickle him again. The shove turned the bumblebee over and thus brought his rear guard into point-blank range.

Luke lost all further interest in the study of entomology. With a yelp of anguish, he sprang up and started off at top speed, howling at every jump. He was so maddened with pain that he neither saw nor cared where he was going. Straight between Fatty's legs he drove just as that gentleman backed away to view in perspective the scene he had so laboriously arranged. Down came Fatty flat on his back, while Luke charged into a group of extra girls, who fled, shrieking, "Mad dog!"

When Fatty regained his feet his half-day's work was dispersed, while a diminishing recital of canine woe in the distance told him that he needn't look for Luke to pose again that day.

Country Now Carrying Out Suggested World Policy, Illuminated by One Among Greatest Poets of All Time, the First Poet of Democracy and the First Democrat of Poets.

also understand why and how it became a nation, the scheme of its founders, the work of their successors and the system of government. He ever urges that the immigrant and the native thereof, must learn the governmental principles of the states to really know and love them.

He always insists that Americans should not regard the president or the Congress or the governors or the state legislatures as their rulers or servants, but merely as delegates deputed to work the will of the real rulers—all the people.

## All Men Are His Dear Brothers.

THIS is a point that is not easy for foreign born, accustomed to the rule of kings to acquire. Those who understand Americanism will agree that the first requisite of an American citizen should be that he knows that he has no rulers, that he rules.

Touching this, Whitman says: "Does it see behind the apparent custodians, the real custodians, standing menacing, silent, the mechanics, Western men, Southerners, significant alike in their apathy and the promptness of their love?"

This may fit the petty politicians who tempered their speech to the foreign vote, especially war-palting congressmen beaten at the recent elections: "Does it see what befalls and has always befallen each temporizer, patcher, outsider, partialist, alarmist, infidel, who ever asked anything from America?"

Whitman gathers all the music of the spheres into him and emits it in one great whole. It is as if all the sounds in all the world, from the gentle rustle of the winds in the quaking asp to the roars of the thunder were combined in one great pipe-organ—the bosom of Walt Whitman, at his touch to boom out in world-volume to inspire mankind.

All men are his dear brothers, from the lowly black Australian or Polynesian, to the Anglo-Norman aristocrat. Especially does he love the enslaved and oppressed. His love for animals is intense, because they are natural and honest. In "Chants Native and Democratic," he writes:

"I believe that there is nothing but America and freedom,

O, to sternly reject all except democracy."

Again:

What are Americans?

A breed-whose testimony is their behavior, What we are WE ARE—nativity is answer enough to all objections;

We wield ourselves as a weapon is wielded, We are executive in ourselves,

We are powerful and tremendous in ourselves—we are sufficient in the variety of ourselves.

Those who understand America will recognize that the people of "these States," as Whitman loves to call them, do "wield themselves as a weapon is wielded."

That is, the motion of the people is, in itself, as powerful as the discharges of thousands of great guns. This the latent power of democracy. The greatest power that America is sending to Europe is democracy.

"Land Must Be Promise and Reliance of Future.

THE German war lords recognize in America their most dangerous foe. They feel that they can trade and barter for peace, a province or a country for a province or a country or a colony, with the European powers. They know that, when they face America, it is not a question of Belgium or Serbia, or Constantinople, or trade or barter of lands, but a question of whether democracy or kaiserism shall survive.

Thus are Whitman's songs of democracy, written in the 30s and 60s, germane to the latest American policy, that laid down by Senator Lodge, in his peace terms speech made in the Senate August 23, 1918. Writing for American statesmen, Whitman prepared them with policies that assume life sixty years after.

At this time, when America is setting standards of statecraft for the world, words of Whitman a half century old prove that he foresaw that it was proper that America should set these policies and standards of statecraft.

He wrote: America, curious toward all foreign characters, stands by its own at all hazards, stands removed, sees itself spacious, composite, sound, Sees itself promulgator of men and women, Initiates the true use of precedents. At one period one nation must lead, One land must be the promise and reliance of the future.

Having regard to "scraps of paper," this:

"To hold men together by paper and seal, or by compulsion, is no account; That only holds men together which is the living principles, as the hold of the limbs of the body or the fibers of plants."

In two lines Whitman wipes the entire German policy of force off the map.

"It amounts to nothing. It won't work. Why bother with it?"

American correspondents, military men everywhere have been much impressed by the march of millions of field-gray Germans through Belgium in 1914. They could not see how such an army could be beaten.

Whitman would have smiled at that army passing and reckoned it of no account whatever when confronted with the spirit of democracy. He would know that the army was not vitalized by any great idea, that its motivating forces were conquest, plunder and loot, that sternly opposed, it would not conquer.

Whitman would have known, what the thought of America knew, that regardless of its superior numbers, training, armament, leadership, foulness, the German Army could not win because the men within it were compressed together by an exterior power, autocracy; not held together by the interior animating spirit, democracy.

The spectacle of the German Army marching through Belgium to sweep democracy off